

V. REMARKS

Claim 9 is objected to because of an informality. The claim is amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 9, 13 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. The claims are amended to obviate the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 15-17 are rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph. Claims 15 and 16 are amended to obviate the rejection. Claim 17 is canceled and, as a result, the rejection as applied thereto is now moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 8, 9 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Muir et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0192090) in view of Loose et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,517,433). Claims 10, 14 and 18 are rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Muir in view of Loose as applied to claims 8, 9 and 11-13 and further in view of Nishiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,507,385). Claims 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Muir in view of Loose as applied to claims 8, 9 and 11-13 and further in view of Okada (U.S. Patent No. 4,573,681). Claim 17 is rejected under 35 USC 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Muir in view of Loose further in view of Okada and yet further in view of Nishiyama. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Features and Advantageous Effect(s) of the Present Invention

In the prior art of the cited references, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art fails to employ a normally white liquid crystal shutter as a liquid crystal shutter in the game machine field. Therefore, Applicant respectfully asserts the fact that present invention presupposes that the normally white liquid crystal shutter display

device is employed as a liquid crystal shutter provided between a transparent flat display, which provides an electronic display, and a reel, in the game machine field.

Further, Applicant respectfully asserts that the following advantageous effect is attained in order to overcome the rejection grounded under the provision of the "obviousness" clause. The present invention enables a transparent state to be maintained, even if no voltage is applied, by employing the normally white liquid crystal shutter. Alternatively, contrary to the normally white liquid crystal shutter, the normally black liquid crystal shutter enables a transparent state to be maintained only in the case where a voltage is applied.

Display state/type of liquid crystal	Normally white liquid crystal shutter (the present invention)	Normally black liquid crystal shutter
Reel shielding	ON state is established when a voltage is applied	OFF state is established if no voltage is applied
Transparent display of reel	OFF state is established if no voltage is applied	ON state is established when a voltage is applied

Therefore, the normally white liquid crystal shutter of the present invention is operative in such a manner that: a transparent state is changed to a shielding state by applying a voltage only when transparent reel display is shielded; and, no voltage is applied when it is not shielded. On the other hand, in the case of the normally black liquid crystal shutter, when transparent reel display is shielded, application of a voltage is disabled, and the transparent state is controlled to be the shielding state. Alternatively, when it is not shielded, a voltage is continuously applied in order to maintain the transparent state.

The slot machine of the present invention enables reel symbols to be shielded according to a game state, by means of a liquid crystal shutter disposed between a flat display and a reel, so as not to be visually recognizable to players.

Further, the slot machine of the present invention is intended for use in the play of a game in such a manner that the reel symbols, which are arranged on the rear side, are visually recognizable to the players via the flat display disposed on the front side.

Therefore, if the liquid crystal shutter fails, for example, a game is not established unless the reel symbols are visually recognizable from the flat display disposed on the front side.

Alternatively, the normally black liquid crystal shutter has entailed a problem insofar that: if a failure occurs during employment of the same shutter, power is shutdown; the liquid crystal shutter is established in an OFF state in which no voltage is applied; and, the reel symbols are always shielded, disabling the play of a game.

In slot machines, a fatal defect could occur in a mode disabling reel symbols to be visually recognizable while in the play of games. The present invention has been made in order to solve the above-described problem, and is characterized by employing the normally white liquid crystal shutter for always transparently displaying reel symbols, even in the OFF state in which no voltage is applied owing to a failure exerted by employment of the liquid crystal shutter.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of the claimed invention as discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that the present claims are allowable over the applied art.

Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

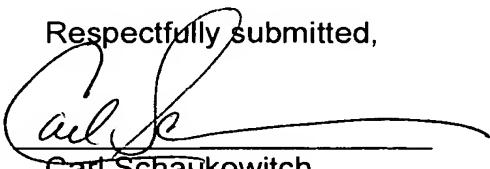
It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance over the prior art of record. Therefore, this Amendment is believed to be a complete response to the outstanding Office Action. Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to set forth further arguments and remarks supporting the patentability of their claims, including the separate patentability of the dependent claims not explicitly addressed herein, in future papers.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
Carl Schaukowitch
Reg. No. 29,211

RADER, FISHMAN & GRAUER PLLC
1233 20th Street, N.W. Suite 501
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: (202) 955-3750
Fax: (202) 955-3751
Customer No. 23353

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